

The Nuts and Bolts of Terrorism

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INTRODUCTION

It is bad enough to present in the face of people like Rachel Ehrenfeld (these proceedings, page XX), Peter Probst (these proceedings, page XX), Ehud Sprinzak (these proceedings, page XX), and Stefan Leader, who are here because they do know what they are talking about. The situation is made even worse when I have to deal with a group of scientists who are accustomed to dealing with things in a very methodical and empirical fashion. However, I must tell you that I find that refreshing because unfortunately many times when the theme or the topic of terrorism is discussed, it is discussed in macro terms or in emotional terms without any kind of really rigorous and empirical analysis. I first encountered this in some discussions when I was doing some consulting with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

When looking at terrorism, you are essentially going to look at two variables: incidents and casualties. I do not know what else you would measure, but if you have some other things to measure, we can talk about it. In terms of trying to measure what is happening, you have to look at those two variables. I think that there is a role for religion and there is a role for philosophy. You run into trouble when you try to deal with empirical items in religious terms.

What I want us to focus on today, and I think that Rachel Ehrenfeld and Peter Probst have laid a nice foundation for it, is getting down to the practical details of the nuts and bolts of what makes terrorism occur. Amorphous and faceless forces do not carry out

terrorism. Human beings carry it out. As I have discovered, human beings are the same the world over and I will illustrate that belief with two anecdotes, which are admittedly, not evidence, per se.

During the Gulf War, Iraq conducted or intended to conduct a global terrorist strike against the United States and sent out terrorist hit teams around the world. They sent two men to Manila disguised as executives. Their mission was to attack the Embassy of the United States. Upon arrival at the Embassy, they encountered security perimeters – a real problem. This is what I mean by human nature. If they fit the stereotypical model of a terrorist, which is to do anything to cause as many casualties as possible, then why did they not attack? What they did do when they encountered the security is turn around and walk down the street. They found the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center, which had no security. This is what I call the path of least resistance. Human beings from all over the world, regardless of religion, race, and ethnic background, or regardless of cultural heritage, follow the path of least resistance. That is true. They were a block away when they bent over to arm the device. This is the part that I am not sure is true, nor do I have proof of this, but it is my speculation that when they were going through the training program on how to build bombs, it must have been right after lunch when they got to the part showing how to properly arm a device. When they bent down to arm it, there was a premature detonation. One of the individuals was thrown 15 feet over a fence and landed on the roof of the German Ambassador's residence. Iraq did take some credit for that because at least they were proud that he had established a new world's record for the standing high jump. However, he was later disqualified because only two-thirds of his body made it over the fence. The other individual was blown down the street.

For the last six years, I have been an instructor in the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Training Program with the State Department. I use segments of the presentation I am making here today when briefing foreign government senior officials. I have briefed officials from over 42 governments, so I feel confident in talking about human nature. I have even briefed the government of Israel. At the briefings, I give the attendees a couple of options. I tell them that lunch will be served at the end of the lecture. There will be a table outdoors with food. I also tell them that there will be an identical table set up ten stories up, but they will have to walk to get there. Every person there has always chosen to eat at the table set up outdoors. I have not found a single individual from all these different nations that says that they need the exercise and will climb the stairs. They all want to eat outdoors. I have also discovered another principle. With the sample of 42 governments and probably close to 2,000 to 3,000 people, I have also asked them a question. Those who have remote controls for their televisions at home (most of the people who attend are men, but sometimes there are women, but most everyone around the world has one), how many of you actually let your wives use the remote control when you are in the room? Men around the world are great. The wives do not get the remote control. It is probably one of the few things that Ariel Sharon and Yassir Arafat will both agree on.

BASIC TERRORISM

When looking at the critical variables on terrorism, we find that there are motives. There are a variety of motives, but I do not want to belabor this. I just want you to take these principles and keep them in the back of your mind as we talk today. In addition to motive, you need to have capability. I define capability as having a place to train, a safe haven, a protected area, where you can recruit, train, and you can rest without fear that somebody in a black ninja suit will kick the door down and either shoot you in the head or take you captive. Finances and logistics are needed. The terrorists are not like the children of Israel, wandering the dessert with manna falling from heaven every morning to keep them fed. They have to have money. We have seen this often. Albeit, some of the evidence is anecdotal or drawn from trials, but in every case, there are resource issues that people who engage in terrorism face. They cannot go to American Express and sign up for a corporate terrorist account. They have to get money from somewhere. I would like to emphasize that international terrorism, by international terrorism I mean a group that is projecting force outside of its domestic territory, cannot occur without some form of state sponsorship, unlike domestic terrorism. I think there has been a little bit of nonsense touted over the last couple of years and particularly since September 11. People feel that Al Qaeda can do anything. They were in Afghanistan with protection. That is why we are over there tearing that place up. Every terrorist group in the world, regardless of their motivation or orientation, needs to have a place or places where they are allowed to operate. When dealing with domestic groups such as the FARC, ETA (the Terrorist Gang in Spain), or the I.R.A., you will find that their ability to operate domestically by an internal community that protects them. These groups, generally speaking, have not projected their force internationally. They have confined their operations domestically.

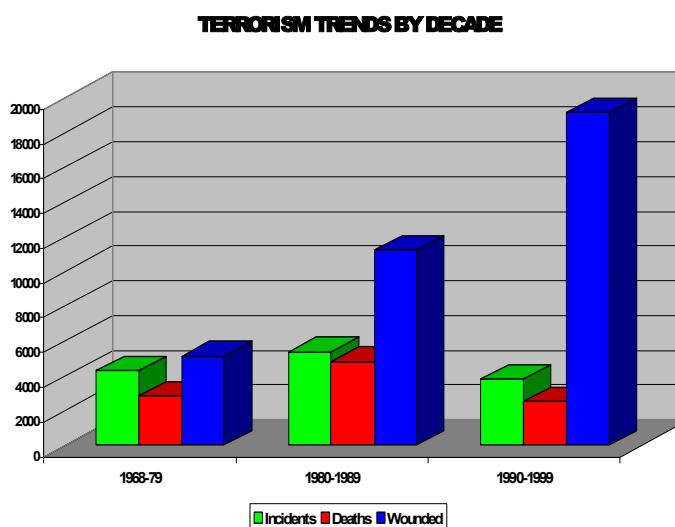
When I mention target intelligence, I am referring to individuals who carry out attacks, but are not Kreskin the mind reader. They are not cosmopolitan men or women that speak all languages, can read your thoughts, and can look at buildings with x-ray vision to see what is inside and how things operate. Let me just illustrate why target intelligence is important. A few years back, there were two Palestinians who intended to blow up the British Consulate in Athens. Apparently, these two knuckleheads did their surveillance on a British holiday. They did not realize what they were doing, because they assumed that there was no security. On the day the operation was to be launched, they left their homes on a motorbike. As they were riding down the road, the motorbike broke down. They were left standing beside the road with a live bomb. They still wanted to carry out their mission, so they were thankful when a bus came along. They got on the bus and rode into town. When they got off the bus, they noticed that the British Consulate was surrounded with security. They made the decision to abort. I suppose the class they had did not teach how to deactivate a device. They went around the corner to an alley and tried to deactivate it. They blew themselves up and killed two innocent people who were just walking down the street. Target intelligence means that you have to understand something about the targets you are going to attack. This leads to opportunity.

The issue of terrorism has been consistently studied and events have been recorded over the past 32 years. Rarely is there a terrorist group found, and I use the broadest sense when I say anywhere in the world, that will want to attack a target that is hard to find, heavily secured, and increases their chances of being killed or captured. This leads to the oddity that we had after the United States Embassy in Beirut was blown up for the second time. The United States finally decided that action was required to protect our facilities. The one flaw, I believe, in Admiral Inman's report was the notion to rank embassies as High Threat or Low Threat. As Peter Probst noted in his presentation, we have a very poor track record in predicting when, where, and what terrorists will strike. Resources are devoted to the protection of the High Threat embassies. When a facility is secured, the chances of it being attacked are decreased. The problem is that in August of 1998, the embassies targeted by terrorists in Kenya and Tanzania were blown up, those were classified as Low Threat and Medium Threat posts. This goes back to the human nature aspect of the path of least resistance.

Terrorists need an element of luck. There is the chaos theory part of terrorism that we have not really looked at. Remember, Ahmed Rasan trained in bin Laden's camps in Afghanistan, but when he was confronted with minimal security at a United States border crossing, he flipped out. He was carrying enough explosives in his trunk to blow himself up if he hit the wrong pothole, but he did not realize that and he ran away. I am sure you all recall Richard Reid, the shoe bomber who attached a paper fuse to his shoelaces. Let me put it this way. He somehow moistened his shoelaces. I do not think his mother taught him very good personal hygiene.

TERRORISM TRENDS

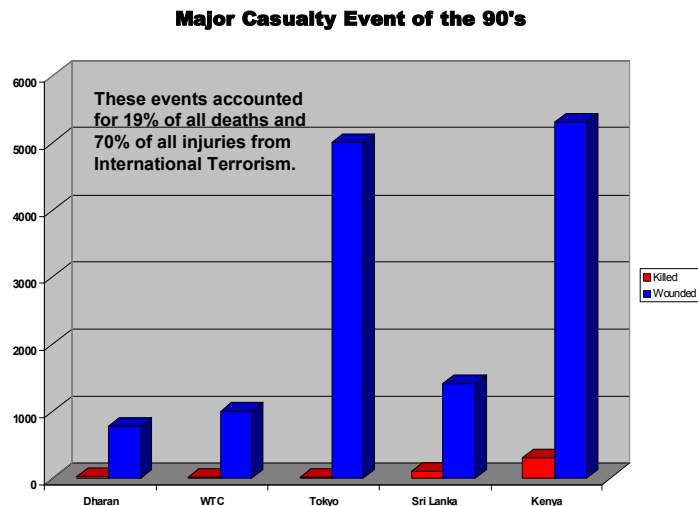
Please note that the numbers and statistics shown here today are not my numbers. Statistics are based on raw numbers developed by the Central Intelligence Agency and passed on to the State Department for the purpose of producing patterns of global terrorism. We can talk later if any of you feel that there is a problem with the data.



For the most part, I feel very confident that most of the major incidents and events have been captured. This chart depicts the nature of the trends over the last 34 years. The boom time for terrorism before September 11 was the mid 1980's. The total number of

fatalities from international terrorism in the 34 years before September 11 was less than 12,000 people. While I do not want to minimize the loss of the lives of 12,000 people, but in the scale of things, I would like to point out that these were international incidents. It does not reflect for example, the almost 100,000 people who died in Algeria in an internal civil war that had a big domestic terrorism component.

The only thing that has consistently grown over time is the number of people injured in international terrorist attacks. You need to look at that and aggregate the data. When you get down to the details, you will find that of that huge amount, 70 percent of those injuries were caused by only five incidences. In other words, out of over 3,400 international attacks, one-tenth of one percent of all incidents accounted for 70 percent of the injuries.



MAJOR CASUALTY EVENTS OF THE 1990'S

- Most of the incidents in 1992 had a link to the Middle East and were low level, since they did not cause casualties, thereby they were considered inconsequential. The following incidents, in my judgment, were consequential and occurred within about a week of each other. Connected with some progress in the Israeli Palestinian Peace Process, were the bombing of the Israeli Embassy, the bomb outside 10 Downing Street, and the bombing of a plane in Panama. The passengers on that plane were primarily Jewish merchants who flew back and forth from Panama City to the Colon Free Zone. On the plane was a man who thought he was carrying a suitcase of cash. Instead, he was carrying a suitcase with bomb that detonated when he opened it.
- In 1993, there was the ambush outside the Central Intelligence Agency, the failed bomb attempt in Kuwait, a car bomb in an effort to kill President Bush, Sr., and the initial World Trade Center bombing.
- In 1994, we had the bombing of the AMIA Cultural Center in Buenos Aires and the bombing of a Philippine airline flight en route to Japan. Ramzi Yousef was captured the following year in connection with the dry run conducted on the Philippine Airlines flight that killed one Japanese passenger.

Confronting Terrorism – 2002

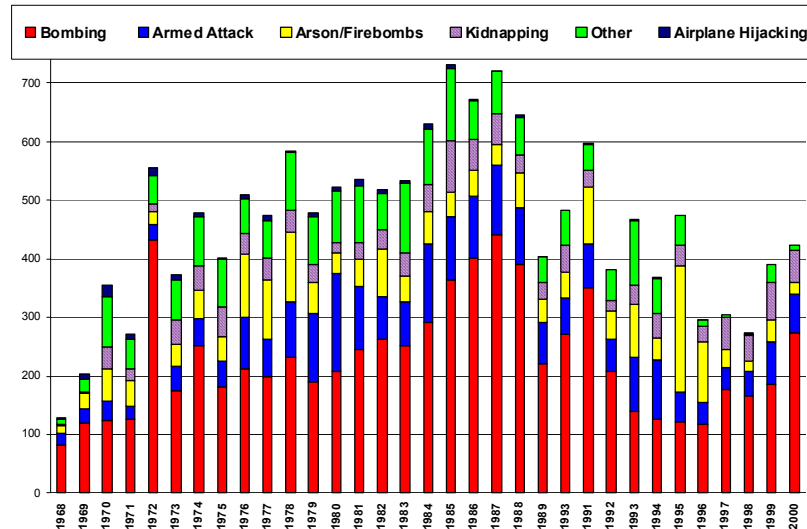
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- The Sang Attack at the National Guard Headquarters in Saudi Arabia killed several AID contractors took place in 1995.
- There was the Oklahoma City bombing in 1996. I think there is clear evidence that Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols committed the crime, but they had some help from individuals with ties to the Middle East. During that year, there was the Tokyo Sarin Gas Attack and the ambush in the US VAM in Pakistan. There was only one attack that was not Islamic or related to Islamic extremists out of all the significant terrorist attacks during those five years. Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia was blown up. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) claimed responsibility for the truck bomb that went off in Sri Lanka. There were American tourists standing in the crowd. Generally, they have not targeted foreigners, however, they have been vicious against Sri Lankans.
- The Tupak Amaru attack in Peru in which 700 hostages were taken took place in 1997.
- The bombings of the United States Embassy in East Africa occurred in 1998.
- The year 2000 brought the bombing of USS Cole and the hijacking of Air India.
- The attacks of September 11 as well as the anthrax attacks all occurred in 2001. These attacks may have been international, but we are not certain that is true.

PREVENTING TERRORISM

We have a road map of who is doing what. Most of those attacks are linked to bin Laden or to some elements of the Al Qaeda network. There have also been significant preventions, all related to groups connected to bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The attempt to

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS BY METHOD OF ATTACK



blow up the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok in 1994 was averted because the man driving the truck had an accident and when the police arrived, he ran away. That is a prevention. There was a plot to destroy 12 United States airliners in Asia (Project Bojinka), that was uncovered by officials, as well as the plot to assassinate Pope John Paul II who had planned a visit to the Philippines. A plot in Jordan to attack a variety of United States and Israeli targets was foiled in 1999. There was also a plot in late December of 1999 to blow up Los Angeles International Airport that was averted. Richard Reed was captured with the famous shoe bomb.

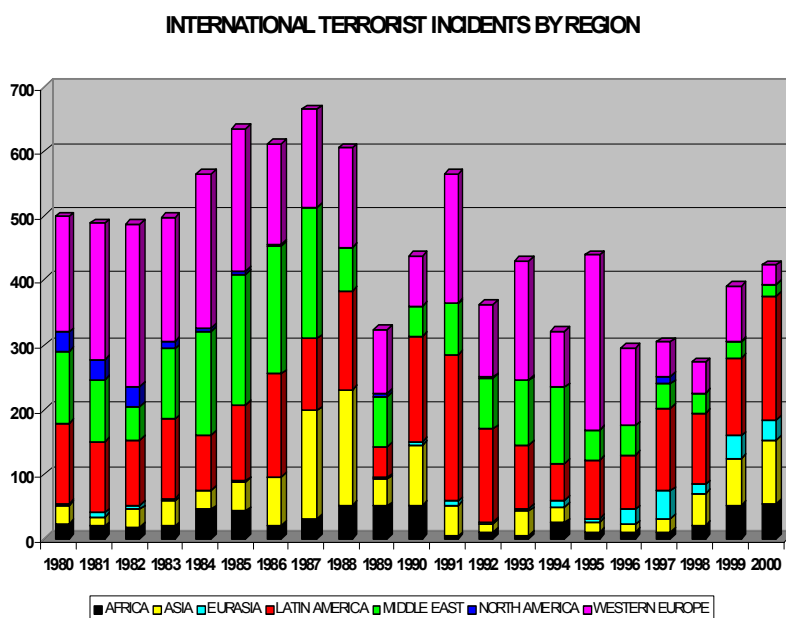
The beauty of the bomb and the reason it is used more than any other device is that you do not necessarily have to be there when it goes off. It is not because they can cause mass casualties, because many of those devices that are counted as bombs are actually Molotov cocktails, pipe bombs, or relatively small devices. Because the leadership wants to survive, you will never see terrorists or leaders of terrorist groups strapping on the bomb belts on the suicide bombers. They find underlings that will do it. There is ultimately a political objective in this.

The number of hijackings decreased once international security measures started going into place in the mid 1980's. I think it was a combination of the security measures that were put in place, as well as the success countries were having in capturing and/or killing those who tried it. There are some huge gaps in aviation security. The reasons why the

terrorist groups have not yet decided to further exploit those would only be speculation. I would like us to just try to focus on some facts here.

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS BY REGION

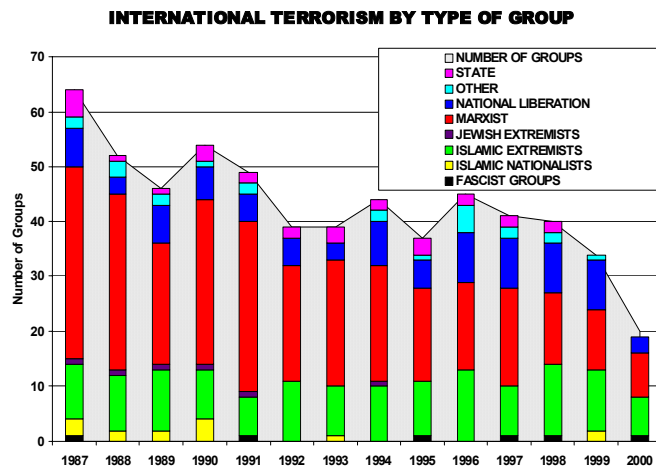
Popular mythology tells us that all international terrorism is Islamic related or is attributed to the Middle East. Measured in terms of incidents, the Middle Eastern tie was very active in the early and mid 1980's. Once there was some progress in the Israeli Arab Peace Accords, that level of international terrorist attacks began decreasing. What you see in the early 1990's is a significant number of incidents in Europe. The Kurdish Workers Party carried out a large portion of the attacks. From the mid 1990's to 2001, the FARC and ELN in Latin America have been increasingly involved.



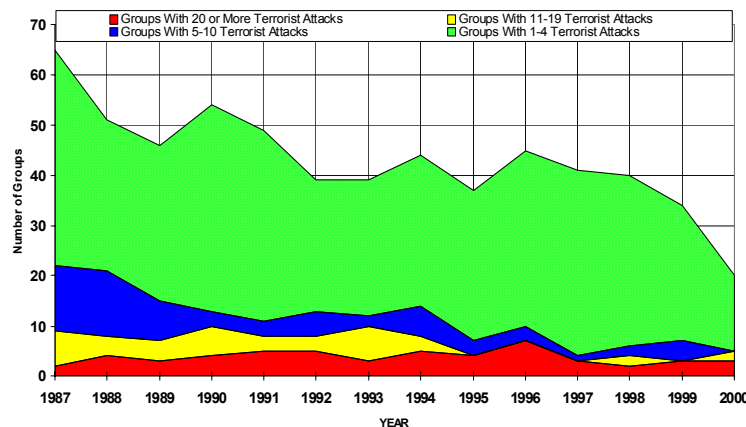
What is interesting to note is that I do not ascribe to Claire Sterling's hypothesis that all terrorism basically, was a function of the Soviet Union. However, I think that there is empirical evidence to suggest that a significant number of groups were getting some financial support from the Soviets and when the Soviet Union collapsed, alternative sources of financing had to be found, thus the increase in illegal drug and criminal activities.

The radical Islamic groups do not constitute the majority of those carrying out attacks. When I first put this together, I must confess I had anticipated that I would see the green part growing and increasing year by year. That is not the case. You can also note that this is what I call the empirical evidence, which points to the decrease in the number of radical Marxist groups that are engaged in international terrorism. Once the Soviet

Union collapsed, there was a statistically significant drop. Another way to look at it is the groups right now in the world that are carrying most of the terrorist activity are either radical Marxist or radical Islamic. That is important from my view. For policy makers, we are not looking at it globally. There are many terms or phrases being used to describe global. Global terrorism is not everywhere and is not occurring at all times in every country. That is just not true. Do they have the capability? Yes, they do, but that has not been the case. There is no empirical evidence to support that assertion.



CLASSIFICATION OF GROUPS BY FREQUENCY OF ATTACKS



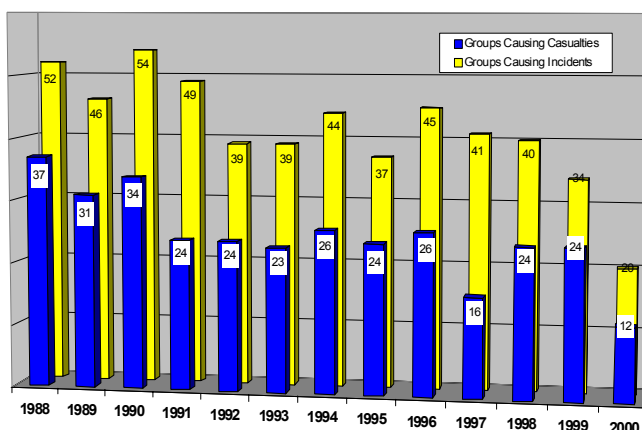
Another way to look at the number of terrorist groups is to break it out in terms of who is carrying out the attacks. When it is done this way, you will find that in any given year, only two to three groups account for more than 20 incidents or most of the attacks. Most of the other groups are content with one to four attacks. However, do not make the mistake by trying to equate the number of attacks with lethality. When you look at bin Laden and Al Qaeda, they are in the green group with very few attacks, but huge in terms of the lethality.

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Another point that I would like to make is that according to the data I was able to look at, not every group is causing casualties. Generally, most do cause casualties, but there are a significant number of groups that are engaged in terrorist incidents that are not causing casualties.

Number of Groups Causing Incident vs. Casualties

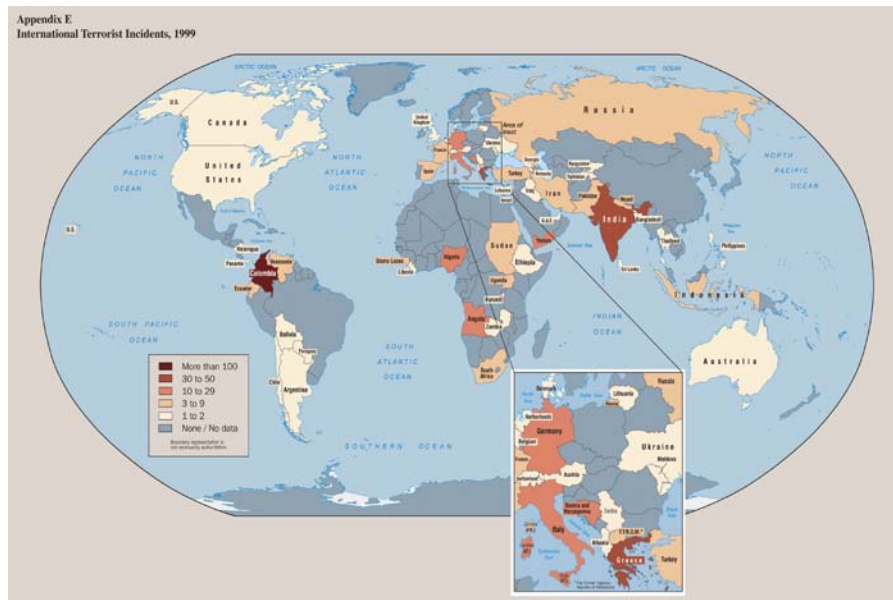


Again, from the policy-making standpoint, if you are facing limited resources, where do you devote your resources? In my view, you want to go after the people who are killing people. We want to get them first. The ones that are blowing up oil pipelines, per se, may not be at the top of your priority list. These are the incidents for the years 1999 and 2000. The dark colors in all three show no terrorist incidents. If this was true, the



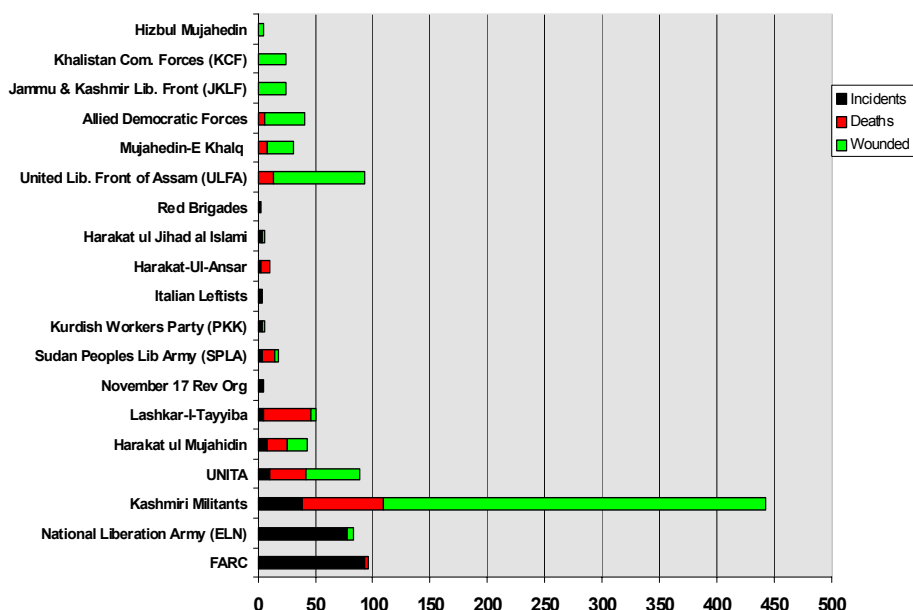
terrorists were everywhere conducting attacks and we would expect to see colors in all countries in the world. You do not see that. When you combine the dark blue with the white, you see that the reality is most of the world does not confront and has not faced terrorist attacks. This is just the reality, not to say that there are not groups that support terrorists.

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS: 1999



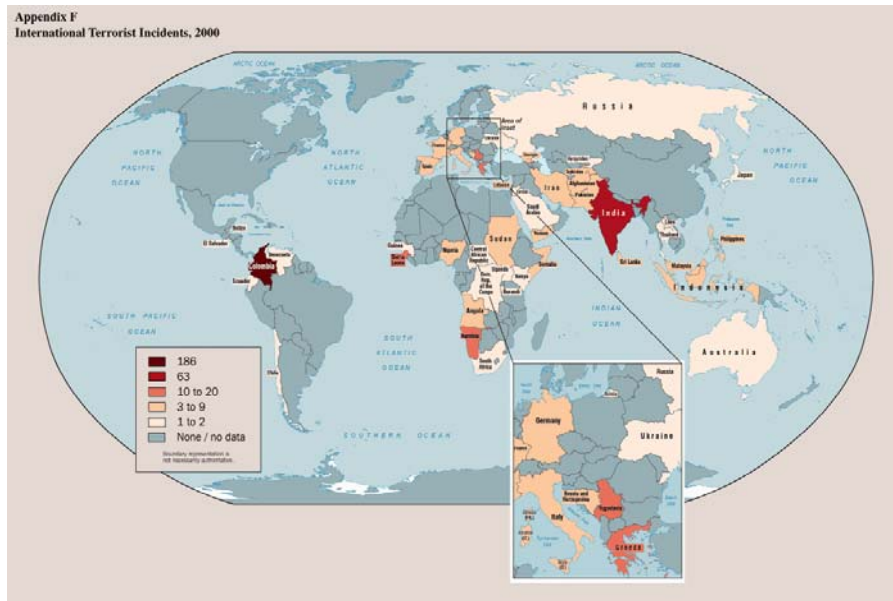
Let us look at this map in a little more detail. Where is most of the terrorism? This has been a consistent pattern for the last two years. You are going to see it again this year in terms of actual incidents. In Colombia, the FARC hosted the I.R.A. in August 2001. There was to be instructions provided on improvised explosives. Nonetheless, most of their activities have been confined internally in Colombia. The activities have been directed against oil pipelines. Statistics do not necessarily tell you the correct story. Patterns of global terrorism indicate that most of the terrorist incidents occurred in Colombia. That is true, but most of the incidents were intent on blowing up pipelines and trying to disrupt the economic infrastructure, not killing people. They were not using their capability and projecting force outside of Colombia. It is defined as international terrorism because they are attacks against foreign companies.

1999 INCIDENTS & CASUALTIES



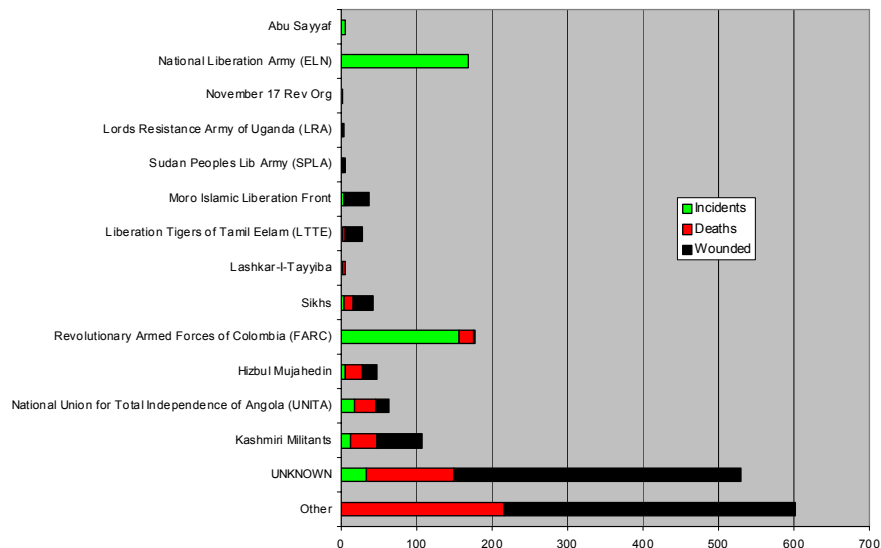
India, however, is one that the United States has ignored. I did not put it on the list of significant attacks, but if you ask the Indians to draw it up, you would have had them add several incidents on the list. The groups that carried out the attacks in India were based in Afghanistan but operated from Pakistan, particularly Harkat-ul Mujahideem and the Lashkar-e-Taiba. This has been going on for several years and what is maddening is that this country has been incurring most of the fatalities and injuries from international terrorist attacks and the world did not care. When we were hit on September 11, we said, “Oh, there are terrorists.” We were like the authorities in Casa Blanca who said that they had discovered gambling in the casino. It has been there all along. We just chose not to look at it. When comparing incidents and casualties, the explanation is that while most terrorism is not Islamic or connected to Islamic extremists, most terrorism that causes injuries and fatalities is. That is what gets on television and I think that is why people perceive Islamic extremists as the source of all terrorism.

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST INCIDENTS: 2000



We see a similar pattern in 2000. Again, Colombia and India were the hot spots. Everything else was nickel and dime, although Yemen had one incident. It was a huge one with the attack on the USS Cole.

2000 INCIDENTS & CASUALTIES



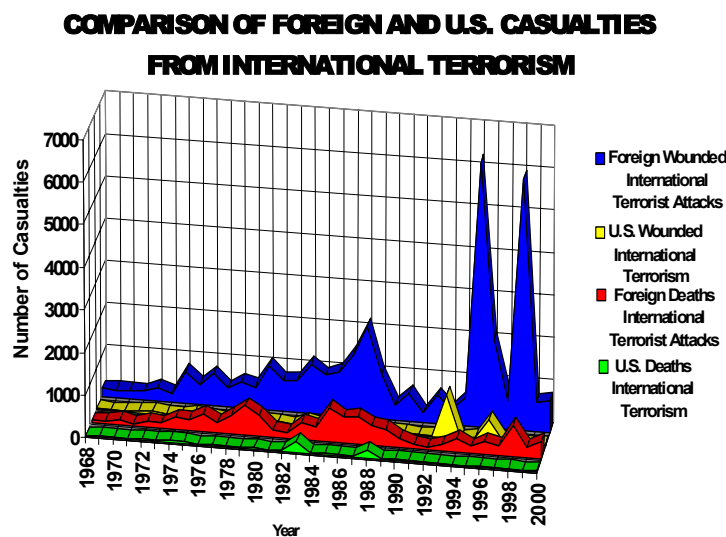
I apologize for the lack of consistency in the colors on this chart. Green represents the incidents, red and black represent the fatalities, but again, it is the same pattern.

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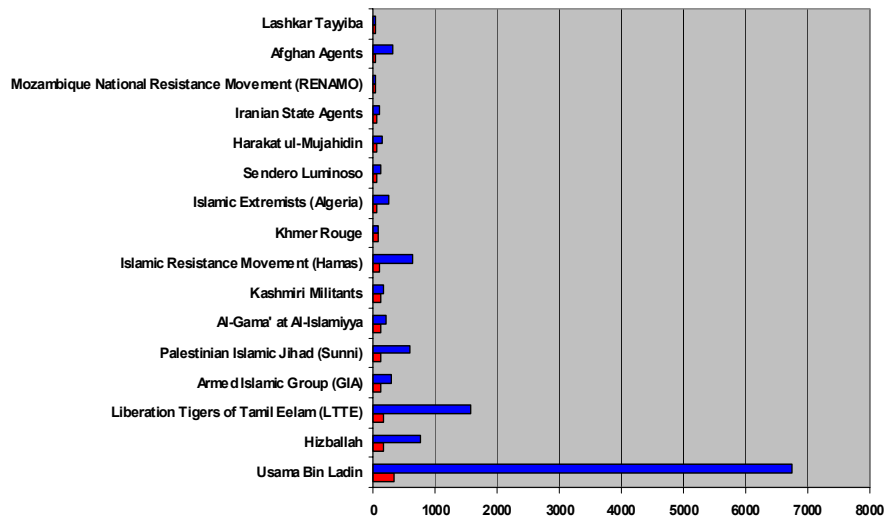
There is a very interesting pattern on this chart, which compares United States and Foreign fatalities and injuries by year. September 11, 2001 is the first time that the United States had most of the fatalities and injuries from an international terrorist attack. In the previous 33 years, the citizens of the United States may have been the targets of terrorist attacks, but they were not the victims. Other than the bombing of the United

States Marines Barracks, the bombing of the United States Embassy in 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon, the bombing of Pan American Flight 103 in December of 1988, the bombing of the World Trade Center, and the attack on Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia; the people who have died or been wounded in these attacks have always been people from other countries — foreigners. In the attack in Kenya, there were 12 Americans and over 250 Kenyans who died in that attack. Almost 5,000 Kenyans were injured. The attack was against the United States, but they killed and injured Kenyans. The same thing happened earlier this year with the bombing in Peru. They targeted the United States, but the victims were Peruvians. I must tell you candidly, that when I was a State Department employee, I was not smart enough to think about looking for cooperation from other nations and asking them to cooperate with us in order to save their lives. This is not about saving the lives of Americans. That is what we want to do, but invariably, in going out and trying to counteract the terrorist groups, we are going to need the cooperation of other countries.



GROUPS RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLED AND WOUNDED

Groups Responsible for Killed & Wounded 1990-1998



In looking at the records of who has been doing the killing and wounding (I apologize that this chart is not updated) over the last 12 years, you will find that it is the radical Islamics, with the numbers for bin Laden increasing. This is where we come to what fundamentally I would challenge you is the major force that is driving international terrorism. The hatred of Jews is driving terrorism. That results in people being killed and injured. There is not another side to that issue. This is like dealing with Hitler. With Hitler, it was not a matter of understanding him or not making enough concessions to his point of view. What we are looking at here is a group of people in the world that have the mentality that if you are a Jew, you are somehow a sub-human, worthy of being eliminated. It is not just directed against Israel. The connection between that element which leads into groups in the United States, Neo-Nazis, radical right, that have some nexus with these radical Islamic groups is something that we do not fully understand and we are ill equipped for collecting the intelligence to go after it. However, in my judgment, what will continue to drive the future of international terrorism attacks is that and the issue is how will anti-semitism be solved. Ultimately, at some point, the Arab nations have to be called to account for allowing this vitriol and hatred to go on unabated.

I lived in Argentina from 1983 through 1985 and there, with the second largest Jewish population in North and South America, outside of New York City, is Buenos Aires, I would frequently run into intelligent, university educated Argentines who would ask me if I had heard about The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. They felt that the Jews wanted to take over Argentina. I am not talking about one or two isolated incidents. I am talking about a very significant number of people in the population that believe that.

FINAL REMARKS

Ultimately, in dealing with the issue of terrorism, we are not dealing with a generic terrorism. I think you have to aggregate it when you look at who is doing it, what their motives are, and within that, how is it counteracted.

Let me close with this. There are actually two points of view to take when dealing with the issue of combating terrorism. One is that no matter what we do, we are lost, because they have the initiative. I do not buy that. I come at it from the opposite point of view. I think that because they are human beings, they are subject to the same kinds of physical limitations that I am, such as they have to sleep and eat, they have to be standing somewhere physically, they have to have the ability to learn and to organize people, and they have to be able to deal with the unexpected. Governments are provided some important resources in combating them, but unfortunately, we are often times our own worst enemy in going after them. This is why it is very important as this problem is analyzed and as policies, procedures, and methods are developed, to attack it analytically. We need to strive for empirical analysis to buttress what we are doing. Only then will we ultimately have some success.

LARRY C. JOHNSON

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